

Shared by:

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I stole this wonderful lesson from Mrs. Ward that helps students understand "theme" in literature. After we finished reading *Maniac Magee*, by Jerry Spinelli, students selected a topic that the book deals with: prejudice, family, friendship, death, unhappiness, love, etc. After going back to find pieces of the story related to that theme, the students determined "What is important for me to learn", another way of defining "theme."

The book is fantastic, and I knew that it was tugging on the kids' hearts, but the responses they came up with really blew me away. A few of them go far beyond what you would expect from the mind and heart of a sixth grader.

Here are some of the students' ideas. I hope you enjoy reading through them.

"Family is not blood, but is from love."

-Jared Bullock

"Anyone can be family, even if you are not related."

-Carsen Lowery

"No matter what people look like, you need to treat them equally."

-Kylee Jackson

"Friends will accept you for who you really are."

-Zach Donaldson

"It does not matter what color you are or your age, you can be friends with anyone."

-David Welch

"You do not have to have things to get good friends and be loved."

-Tyler Pierce

"Prejudice is more than just fear of a different kind; it's fear of the unknown."

-Levi Shaffer

"Death is harsh, but it's not always your fault."

-Matthew Money

"True friends always stay around."

-Nicholas Harris

“Making friends with your enemies is a good thing.”

-Bailee Hempfling

“Looks don’t matter. We’re all the same on the inside.”

-Tiffany Bartholomew

“Even if life is full of sorrows, there is still a reason to live if somebody loves them.”

-Carter Pogue